

*Supporting Family  
Safety for  
Muslim Families*



*Erie County Family Court*

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None of the information contained in this document should be interpreted as legal advice. Please seek qualified legal counsel for a full determination of your obligations under the law.

*“Domestic Violence is one of the most threatening elements facing Muslim families in America. It is the breaking of vows and the betrayal of trust. Domestic Violence not only happens between husband and wife, but can also happen between parents and children. Having witnessed so many cases of Domestic Violence, of sisters living in fear, and feeling ashamed to speak up, I feel that it is my duty, as an Imam, to be the voice of those who do not have a voice. I believe that we must work to create an environment in which sisters can come forward without fear, shame, or hesitation, to say they are in need of help and to seek safety for themselves and their children.*

***Imam Mohamed Magid,***  
*President of the Islamic Society of North America*

## ***Purpose of this Pamphlet***

The purpose of this pamphlet is to provide guidance to your family if you find that there is a conflict between your culture and the community in which you live. Different countries have different laws. In the United States, courts are involved with families to ensure justice and safety. It can be very confusing. Some actions might be acceptable in certain cultures which the United States legal system forbids, such as family violence and abuse.

### ***I will find myself in Family Court if:***

- My child is arrested
- Child Protection Services files a petition against me
- I request an Order of Protection against a family member, spouse or co-parent
- A family member, spouse or co-parent files for an Order of Protection against me
- There is a custody dispute
- I file a PINS (Person In Needs of Supervision) petition against my child.

Erie County Family Court is located at: One Niagara Plaza,  
Buffalo, New York 14202.  
Their phone number is (716) 845–7400.

# *The Lifetime Spiral of Gender Abuse*

*Describes the potential for violence across a person's lifetime*

- Infant:** Female fetuses are aborted; infanticide; malnourishment- less food and/or less nutritious food; withholding medical care
- Child:** No or very little schooling; child labor; child prostitution; physical abuse and/or neglect; sexual abuse- incest and/or molestation
- Teenager:** Rape or coerced sex- resulting in pregnancy can get victim killed; forced marriage (to parent's choice, to a much older man, to the woman's rapist); ignorance about sex, anatomy, sexual health; control over sexuality and sexual orientation; trafficking (including mail order brides); forced into prostitution
- Young Adult:** Date violence; date rape; rape-including wartime rape; denying choice of marriage partner and or sexual orientation; dowry-related deaths
- Adult:** Domestic violence; same-sex domestic violence; violence and/or abuse by mother-, father-, brother-, sister-in-law and/ or by natal family members; sexual abuse that can include marital rape; being forced to watch and imitate pornographic acts; extreme sexual neglect; economic abuse and isolation from family and friends; battering during pregnancy; being coerced into criminal activity; extreme exploitation of household labor; sexual harassment (by employers, fellow employees, fathers- or brothers-in-law, clergy, therapists, doctors); victim blaming and rejection by community; being infected with STDs and or HIV; kidnapping and or killing of children; honor killing; murder, also referred to as intimate homicide or femicide
- Elder:** Physical abuse by adult children or caretakers; spouse abuse; exploitation for household labor or child care; withholding health care and medication; demeaning widowhood

*Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence, January 2002*

RAHAMA  
**Resources and Help Against Marital Abuse**  
1957 Genesee Street  
Buffalo, NY 14211  
(716) 908-6505

VIVE, Inc.  
50 Wyoming Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14215  
(716) 892-4354  
info@vivelacasa.org

VIVE is a non-profit organization, it is the second largest homeless shelter in WNY and is the largest refugee shelter in the United States. It is the only organization in the country whose primary focus is serving refugees as they begin the process of seeking asylum. VIVE operates La Casa shelter with 112 beds, a kitchen, a legal clinic, and a free "store" to distribute donated clothing. VIVE is **not** affiliated with any government or governmental agency, including the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS, formerly INS) or Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) or the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA).

Services include: Food, shelter, clothing, healthcare and legal services to refugees as they await their appointment to enter Canada or their U.S. asylum hearing. In addition, legal advice and assistance for refugees seeking protection in Canada or the United States is also provided. VIVE provides a staff attorney, paralegal assistants, and volunteers. In addition, the attorney members of our Board of Directors provide *pro bono* legal work and support.

## *Resources for Further Information on Islamic Family Harmony*

Safe and Peaceful Families  
500 Grove St.  
Herndon, VA 20170  
(571) 323-2198 (phone)  
(571) 323-2199  
Email: [info@faithus.org](mailto:info@faithus.org)  
Website: [www.faithus.org](http://www.faithus.org)

Faith Trust Institute  
(206) 634-1903 (phone)  
Website: [www.faihttrustinstitute.org](http://www.faihttrustinstitute.org)

Islamic Social Services Association  
Website: [www.issausa.org](http://www.issausa.org)

### **Journey's End Refugee Services-Making Strangers Neighbors**

2495 Main Street, Suite 317  
Buffalo, NY 14214  
(716) 882-4963  
(716) 882-4977 (FAX)  
[www.jersbuffalo.org](http://www.jersbuffalo.org)

Journey's End Refugee Services, Inc. is a Christian community-based organization with the mission of welcoming refugees without regard to ethnic origin or creed and to assist them to become healthy, independent, contributing members of the community. Services to refugees include: Western New York resettlement services, employment services, immigration services, interpreting services and education both for clients and our community. Journey's End Interpreting Services Department offers high quality service for health and human service organizations, medical offices, educational institutions, legal and government agencies, corporations, and more. We offer skilled and experienced professionals who interpret from English into more than 25 languages.

Lt.Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center Of WNY  
1081 Broadway  
Buffalo, NY 14212  
(716) 893-7222  
(716) 893-3279 (FAX)  
[www.urbanctr.org](http://www.urbanctr.org)

Other locations:

- 385 Paderewski, Polonia Hall
- 129 Lewis Street, T.J. Dulski Community Center
- 104 Lewis Street, Thomas J Wojnar Senior Apartments
- 185 Rother Refugee Apartments

The Matt Urban Center's Mission is to provide programs that enhance the quality of life, preserve neighborhoods and encourage economic development. Services include: Housing Services, Senior Service, Senior Apartments, Weatherization Programs, Youth and Family Services, Homeless Outreach Services, G.E.D. and Work Skills Training, 2 Food Pantries.

MPAC-WNY  
**Muslim Public Affairs Council**  
6343 Transit Road, Ste 1  
Depew, NY 14043  
(716) 683-1840

**Parent Network of WNY**  
1000 Main Street  
Buffalo NY 14202  
716-332-4175  
[www.parentnetworkwny.org](http://www.parentnetworkwny.org)

Parent Network helps families who believe their children may have learning problems or disabilities understand how to work with the schools and find services available in the community.

## ***What is Domestic Violence?***

Many people believe that family violence and domestic abuse refers only to physical injuries. Family violence and domestic abuse also includes trying to intimidate and gain power and control over another person.

## ***How do I know if a member of my family is a victim of abuse?***

Some examples of abuse include:

- Trying to gain control over another by means of isolating the person from friends or family
- Threatening to leave and humiliate their spouse
- Justifying their wrong actions by saying they have a right to do this according to Allah
- Saying they need to beat their children because they love them and think this is appropriate punishment and need to prevent them from becoming too "Americanized."

## ***How do I know if my wife or husband is abusive?***

Abuse does not always mean physical harm and sometimes it's hard to identify. When an organization called "Muslim Men Against Domestic Abuse" interviewed Imam Mohamed Magid, who is the Vice President of the Islamic Society of North America, he explained that, "Domestic Abuse is one of the leading and most serious issues in the Muslim community. Many people do not realize that abuse is not only physical injuries; there exist emotional, verbal, financial, and spiritual forms of abuse." (Excerpted from MMADA)

# *What Domestic Abuse within a Muslim Family May Look Like:*

*By: Dr. Sharifa Alkhateeb*

## **Using Isolation**

- Husband says that as the "qawwamun" (manager) of his wife, he has the God-given right to control everything she does
- Need permission to use telephone, visit parents, meet with friends or attend church and community gatherings

## **Minimizing, Denying, Blaming**

- Denying the abuse by calling it "discipline"
- Saying the wife caused the abuse
- Tells wife that discussing episodes of abuse equals violation of her Islamic responsibility to respect her husband's privacy

## **Using Children**

- Children told they are being beaten to prevent becoming too "American"
- Father threatens to get custody from Islamic court, send children overseas, marry them off young or kidnap them
- Children's behaviors are used as excuse to batter wife
- Father encourages children to insult or disrespect mother

## **Using Male Privilege**

- Husband uses religion to justify dominance and inflexibility
- Wife's opinions considered as "Western" and un-Islamic
- Children abused as "right" of Muslim father
- Wife encouraged to fear husband

## **Using Economic Abuse**

- Refusing to allow wife to get education, training or job
- Taking her entire paycheck
- Hiding family income

301 14th Street  
Buffalo, NY, 14213  
(716) 828-8690

**Focused Learning of Youth (FLY) Afterschool Program** helps middle school refugees achieve grade level through daily homework help, tutoring and enrichment activities.

**Jericho Road Parent Child Home Program (PCHP)** promotes learning rich environments equipping parents as a child's first teacher and increasing the school-readiness of toddlers through weekly home visits.

**City Roots** partners with housing agencies to assist refugee families in buying homes, providing first time homebuyers education and a monthly refugee homebuyers' club.

**Hope Refugee Sewing Program** equips refugees with basic sewing machine skills, materials and entrepreneurial opportunity through weekly classes and workshops.

**ESL Initiative** provides language support to those most challenged in learning English through in-home, volunteer led conversational groups.

### **Jewish Family Services of Buffalo and Erie County**

70 Barker Street  
Buffalo, NY 14209  
(716) 883-1914  
[www.jfsbuffalo.org](http://www.jfsbuffalo.org)

The Resettlement Program of Jewish Family Service of Buffalo and Erie County (JFS) has been resettling refugees and immigrants in the Western New York area since 1987. We have resettled over 2,000 individuals from diverse cultures and populations around the world, namely Ethiopians, Iranians, former USSR, Turkish, Burmese and African.

In the past two years, FY 2010 and FY 2011, our resettlement population has been comprised of refugees from Bhutan, Burma, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan. We facilitate entrance into the United States, greet clients upon their arrival at the airport and provide them with food, clothing and basic shelter with the goal of helping them to become self-sufficient. JFS support includes:

- Employment counseling and placement
- ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction
- Securing health care and other social support services
- Public school enrollment
- General mental health and behavioral health counseling and support

In addition, JFS offers Mental Health and Social Service programs that offer comfort, counseling and connection to a broad network of support. In every service area from elder care to refugee resettlement to behavioral and physical health. Jewish Family Service (JFS) is a licensed outpatient psychiatric clinic that helps people of all ages tackle emotional, behavioral and interpersonal difficulties. We provide psychiatric diagnosis and treatment, medication management and individual and group therapy for a broad range of psychiatric conditions.

### **International Institute Of Buffalo NY**

864 Delaware Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14209-2093  
(716) 883-1900  
www.iibuff.org

Since 1918, the International Institute of Buffalo has assisted immigrants, refugees, and others who face linguistic and cultural barriers to become self-sufficient, active members of our community. Today, the Institute serves as a dynamic international center, providing critical services to refugees and immigrants and promoting global understanding and connections in Western New York.

Services include: Refugee services, interpreting and translation, legal issues, immigrant victim services, international visitor housing, global education, community training including events that raise awareness and language classes.

### **President International League of Muslim Women**

162 Box Street  
Buffalo, NY 14211  
Margaret Gillette, President

### **Jericho Road Family Practice**

Jericho Road has provided safety-net healthcare for low income areas of Buffalo, New York since 1997.

#### West Side Office

184 Barton Street  
Buffalo, NY 14213  
(716) 881-6191

#### East Side Office

1609 Genesee Street  
Buffalo, New York 14211  
(716) 892-2775

### **Jericho Road Ministries**

Jericho Road Ministries was formed in 2003 to compliment the medical services of Jericho Road Family Practice and provide more holistic care for the West Side Community. In 2009, we merged with Hope Refugee Services, dramatically expanding our services.

#### Programs and Locations:

184 Barton Street  
Buffalo, NY 14213  
(716) 348-3000

**Financially Fit** offers free, basic financial education to refugee and low-income women. The program seeks to share knowledge of financial systems, like bank accounts, loans, and credit, along with basic budget techniques in order to empower participants to a healthier financial lifestyle.

233 West Ferry  
Buffalo, New York 14213  
(716) 881-0539

**Hope Refugee Drop In Center** offers free advocacy, assistance and interpretation for refugees seeking to adjust to the U.S. through walk-in appointments, refugees can receive help for any challenge they are facing. They come in, identify their own needs, and together we develop a response.

**The Priscilla Project** provides targeted assistance for medically at-risk mothers through volunteer mentors, educational sessions, doula supports and increased health and social services.

## **Using Coercion and Threats**

- Threatening to marry another wife
- Threatening "God-ordained" wife beating
- Threatening to leave her without money
- Threatening to spread the word that she is an adulteress
- Making her drop police charges of domestic violence to preserve family's reputation

## **Using Intimidation**

- Having the local Imam tell the wife that the abuse is her fault
- Hiding/destroying important documents
- Taking her jewelry and selling it
- Collecting, displaying weapons
- Stalking and following
- Harming or threatening to harm family pets

## **Using Emotional Abuse**

- Making fun of her inadequate Islamic knowledge
- Making her believe she is incapable of directing her own life
- Telling abused women they must be quiet and obedient
- Lying to her extended family in letters
- Saying her lovemaking is inferior to Americans or other Muslim women

## ***Order of Protection:***

An Order of Protection is a court document where a judge orders a person to not act in certain ways such as:

- Order him/her to stay away from your home
- Order him/her to stay away from your work
- Order him/her to stop abusing you
- Order him/her to stop abusing your children
- Order him/her to not contact you whether by phone, text message, email, letter, or even through other people

An order of protection is only effective if the abuser and the victim both know the police will get involved if it is violated. This means that if you have a court order and the abuser violates it and does not obey it, you need to call the police so that he can be arrested. You may also file a violation petition later in court.

You may get a **Civil** Court Order of Protection by filing a petition in Family Court. Family Court is open Monday–Friday from 8:30–4:30. Erie County Family Court is located at 1 Niagara Plaza (at Niagara and Franklin Streets), Buffalo, New York.

You can also apply for an Order of Protection at the Family Justice Center (FJC) 237 Main Street, 14th Floor, Buffalo, 558–7233. The FJC is open Monday–Friday from 9–5.

You may get a **Criminal** Court Order of Protection only if the abuser has been arrested and charged with a crime.

You have a right to be represented by an attorney in this matter. If you cannot afford to hire an attorney, you may be eligible to have an attorney represent you in this case for free.

### Community Service Programs:

Heal-International collaborates with many profit and non-profit organizations in the city of Buffalo to build a stronger Buffalo. Heal-International works with.....Voice of Buffalo, PUSH, Jericho Road, International Institute, Office of the Mayor, Educational institution like University at Buffalo, Buffalo State College, and D'Youville College. In its services, Heal-International collects and distributes food packages and clothing's in a monthly delivery by U-Haul truck to different refugee communities. In the short time of its existence, Heal has shown significant efforts in serving the WNY community and was rewarded for its partnership efforts by the Citizen Empowerment department of the City of Buffalo.

### Conflict Resolution Department:

Heal-International recognizes the clash of cultures through misunderstandings. We aim to eradicate any conflicts involving differences and other family disputes. The organization has experts in mediation and conflict resolution that will aid in resolving disputes within families, groups, and/or communities. The organization has helped with domestic violence, child abuse cases, mediated in marriage consultations, and cultural misunderstandings. Generally, this department focuses on maintaining a healthy and friendly environment free of violence and tolerant of others. The organization helps everyone in need of a third party mediation and encourages community members to use this resource. All information is confidential and shall not be shared or used for any other purpose but for those involved.

### Health and Legal advisory:

Heal-International provides translators, advisor and mediatory services in both Health and Legal matters. The organization is gifted for its refugees fluent in many languages to help translate verbally and in documentations. Refugees can call the office when they schedule appointments in hospitals, school, and employment interviews for any support. Heal assists in the completion of applications, does mock interviews before the actual interview and the follow-up letters. Legally, Heal-International works with local lawyers to refer cases and negotiate for a fair price. Many generous lawyers provide free consulting services in all issues from domestic violence, property issues, lawsuits, and refugee document filings.

### **Housing Opportunities Made Equal, Inc. (HOME)**

700 Main Street, 3rd Floor  
Buffalo, NY 14202-1926  
phone: (716) 854-1400  
fax: (716) 854-1140

### **Imams Council of Greater Western New York**

PO Box 373 – Ellicott Station  
Buffalo, New York 14203-0373

The Imams Council of Greater Western New York is the representative voice of Islamic leaders in Upstate New York. It is the second largest Consulting body of Islamic leaders in the state of New York. The largest such body in New York state is the Majlis Ash-Shura of Metropolitan New York (Islamic Leadership Council), which has more than seventy Islamic organizations participating.

### **General Functions of the Council**

Brotherly Advice and Conflict Resolution among Muslims  
Collecting Funds for Islamic Causes and Calamities  
Conducting Monthly Majlis ash-Shura Meetings  
Da'wah (Invitation to Islam)  
Imams Tours- Khutbas, Lectures & Seminars at Area Masaajid  
Issuing Legal Decisions on Islamic Matters  
News and Media Contacts on Islamic Concerns

**Buffalo West Even Start Family Literacy Program**

150 Maryland Street (The Belle Center)  
 Buffalo, NY 14201  
 (716) 852-8373 Ext 14 or 21  
 (716) 854-0486 (FAX)  
 www.e2ccb.org

Buffalo West Even Start Family Literacy Program does not charge any fee. Services include: GED Courses, parenting classes, adult basic education, ESL classes, parent support, after school tutoring, child care, home visits and parent/child time together. In addition, they collaborate with other community agencies to fill in the gaps of services they do not offer and makes referrals on an as needed basis. They services zip codes 14201, 14213 and 14207.

**Catholic Charities Immigration And Refugee Assistance Program**

525 Washington St.  
 Buffalo, NY 14202  
 (716) 842-0270  
 (716) 842-0509 (FAX)  
 Refugee Resettlement Program  
 www.ccnny.org

The Immigration and Refugee Assistance Program offers a wide variety of services to those individuals throughout the world, who for a number of reasons, are forced to leave their native homeland and come to the Buffalo area to rebuild their lives.

Services include: Housing assistance, translation/interpretation, English as a second language instruction, case management, job development, employment placement, acculturation, and assistance with immigration and citizenship applications.

The program also offers parishes, schools, and civic groups and families opportunities to enrich their own lives by reaching out to the newcomers in Western New York. Volunteer opportunities are available for people of all ages.

**Heal International**

233 West Ferry  
 Buffalo, NY 14213-1816  
 (716) 931-5778  
 www.heal-international.org

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Conflict Resolution, Women's Empowerment, Educational services, Youth and Children's services, Community services and will also link to other area resources

Heal-International seeks to advance and promote the education for the poor and refugee population. Heal-International provides computer training in Microsoft office applications in Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint to increase computer literacy. Upon request, we have area college students who volunteer to support those who need extra academic assistance. We also provide boys and girls after school programs in athletics and academic extra curriculum activities. Services range from individual tutorials, group help, SAT preparation, and helping with Library resources. The organization offers French and English as second Language courses to adults with language barriers.

Heal-International has to date succeeded in helping assist the youth to work over the summer, volunteer in the community and work towards their own individual goals of finishing education.

If you feel that this applies to you, tell the Judge, and you will be given a referral form for the Assigned Counsel Program. You should then contact the Assigned Counsel Program immediately to see if you are eligible. You should take this notice and the petition to the Assigned Counsel office at 170 Franklin Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor in downtown Buffalo between 9:00 a.m. and noon, or between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Your eligibility assessment will be quicker if you also take with you any public assistance, food stamp, SSI or Medicaid card you may have in your own name, documentation of any other benefit you get, such as unemployment, SSD, etc., and copies of recent pay stubs if you are working.

## ***What Happens when a Family Offense Petition is filed?***

1. A family offense petition is used to obtain an order of protection against a relative, mother or father of your child, a spouse or a boyfriend or girlfriend.
2. A court will issue an order of protection if you allege that you have been assaulted or harassed. They will file a temporary order until they hear your alleged abuser in court. A judge will eventually order a final order of protection lasting 1, 3, 5, or 8 years.
3. How to file: Go to the Domestic Violence Advocate who can assist you with your petition. Petition processing is located in Erie County Family Court on the 4th Floor. Remember you can ask for an interpreter to assist you, as well.
4. There are two types of orders of protection: a Family Court Order and a Criminal Court Order. A Family Court Order cannot place a person in jail unless he/she violates it and does not obey the order.
5. Most temporary orders of protection say that the respondent must not assault, menace or harass you, but can ask for additional terms. You must tell the petition clerk specifically what you like ordered.

## Safety Planning

(From the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence)

- **Memorize emergency phone numbers**
- **Keep a phone** in a room you can lock from the inside; if you can, get a cellular phone that you keep with you at all times  
**If the abuser has moved out, change the locks on your door;** get locks on the windows
- **Plan an escape route** out of your home; practice with your children.
- Agree on a close place to meet if you get separated
- Think about where you would go if you need to escape
- **Ask your neighbors** to call the police if they see the abuser at your house; make a signal for them to call the police, for example, if the phone rings twice, a shade is pulled down or a light is on
- **Pack a bag** with important things you'd need if you had to leave quickly; put it in a safe place, or give it to a friend or relative you trust
- Include **cash, car keys & important information** such as: court papers, passport or birth certificates, medical record medicines, immigration papers in a Ziploc bag
- **Get an unlisted phone number**
- **Block caller ID**
- **Use an answering machine;** screen the calls

### How To Make Your Children Safer

- **Teach them not to get in the middle of a fight**
- **Teach them how to get to safety,** to call 911, to give your address & phone number to the police
- **Teach them who to call for help**
- **Give the principal at school or the daycare center a copy of your court order;** tell them not to release your children to anyone without talking to you first; use a password so they can be sure it is you on the phone; give them a photo of the abuser
- **Make sure the children know who to tell at school if they see the abuser**
- **Make sure that the school knows not to give your address or phone number to ANYONE**

## Other Resources

**ACCESS of WNY Inc.**  
**Arab American Community Center for Economic and Social Services**  
609 Ridge Road  
Lackawanna, NY 14218  
(716) 332-5901

**The B.E.L.L. Network**  
Gary Welborn  
welborgs@buffalostate.edu  
716-878-6428  
www.bellnetwork.org

The Buffalo English Language Learner Network is a coalition of over 70 area agencies, organizations, colleges, universities and the Buffalo Public Schools who are leading efforts to create a seamless continuum of supports to promote educational and professional successes from cradle to college to career for English language learners ages 0 - 25, primarily in the 14213 zip code.

**Border Community Service**  
PO Box 2040  
Niagara University, NY 14109-2040  
Phone: 716 286-8304; FAX: 716 286-8016  
www.niagara.edu/bordercommunityservice

Emergency Preparedness Training- the City of Buffalo, in partnership with Border Community Service of Niagara University, offers free community preparedness training and participation opportunities in the City of Buffalo. Presentations focus on the four key strategic points of U.S. Department of Homeland Security's "Ready America" program: 1. Get a Kit, 2. Make a Plan, 3. Be Informed and 4. Get Involved. The goal of this training is to empower individuals to better serve themselves, their families, friends, and neighbors in the event of an emergency.

**Buffalo Public Schools**  
www.buffaloschools.org.

The Buffalo Public Schools educate over 30,000 students in grades Pre-K through Grade 12 in over 60 schools. Our students come from all over the world and speak over 70 languages. For a complete listing of schools and departments, visit the district website.

Some helpful contacts are:

<b>Main Switchboard</b> .....	816-3500
<b>Adult Education</b> 389 Virginia Street.....	888-7088
<b>Attendance Services</b> 428 City Hall .....	816-3045
<b>Student Support Services</b> 432 City Hall.....	816-3547
<b>Language Assessment Center</b> 33 Ash Street.....	816-3984
<b>Multilingual Education</b> 150 Lower terrace.....	816-3048 ext. 8776
<b>Parent University</b> 179 Albany Street .....	816-3170
<b>Student Placement</b> 33 Ash Street.....	816-3717

**Legal Assistance:**

Neighborhood Legal Service.....	847-0650
Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo.....	853-9555
Volunteer Lawyers Project.....	847-0662
Family Court Intake .....	845-7400

**Alcohol & Drug Abuse Treatment:**

ADDS (Alcohol & Drug Dependency Services).....	855-0163
Beacon Center .....	831-1937
Brylin Hospital .....	886-8200
Erie County Medical Center 1280 Main.....	883-4517
Northern Erie .....	874-5536
Southern Erie .....	648-7584
Horizon Health Services .....	831-1800
Lakeshore Behavioral .....	842-0440
Mid-Erie Mental Health .....	895-6700
Spectrum Human Svc.....	662-6638
Tri-County Hospital .....	532-9202

**Grief & Loss Counseling/Support:**

Life Transitions Center .....	836-6460
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**Parent Support/Hotline:**

Parents Anonymous (Joan Male Family Support Center).....	892-2172
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**Counseling for Children:**

Catholic Charities.....	856-4494
Child & Adolescent Treatment Services .....	835-4011
Child & Family Services.....	842-2750

**Medical Clinics for Children:**

Immunizations(E.C.Health).....	858-6450
Children's Hospital (Hodge).....	878-7488
Children's Hospital(608 William).....	858-7372
Children's Hospital (Westside) .....	859-4180
Geneva B Scruggs.....	881-2361
Mercy Hospital.....	828-2775
Northwest Buffalo Health Center.....	875-2904

- Keep a piece of paper or card in your child's backpack and include 4 quarters taped to the paper with a list of names, phone numbers and addresses that your child can contact if they not safe.

## *Family Violence Programs*

Child and Adolescent Treatment Services .....	835-7807
YWCA of the Tonawandas .....	692-5580

***BATTERERS PROGRAMS***

Catholic Charities Domestic Violence Program for Men .....	896-6390
Horizon Human Services, IMPACT Program .....	833-3622
Veterans Administration, Domestic Violence Program .....	862-3103
Mid Erie Counseling & Treatment Services .....	895-6700
YWCA of the Tonawandas .....	692-5580

***HOSPITAL-BASED ADVOCACY***

Crisis Services.....	834-3131
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***COMMUNITY ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS***

The Erie County Coalition Against Family Violence .....	884-6002
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***SUPERVISED VISITATION CENTERS***

Catholic Charities Visitation Programs.....	896-6390
YWCA of the Tonawandas .....	692-5580
Salvation Army 883-9800	

<b><i>FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER OF ERIE COUNTY</i></b> .....	558-7233
237 Main Street, Buffalo 14203	

## *Local Resources for Domestic Violence*

### **CRISIS INTERVENTION—24 HOUR HOTLINES**

Haven House Hotline .....	884-6000
Crisis Services Hotline .....	834-3131
Hispanics United of Buffalo – Spanish/English hotline .....	481-8867
<b>Family Justice Center</b> .....	558-7233

### **POLICE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCATES**

#### **LOCATED IN POLICE DEPTS**

Emergency Services .....	911
Erie County Sheriff's Department - Family Offense Unit .....	667-5259
Buffalo Police Department/Sex Offense Squad .....	851-4494
Amherst Police Department, Family Offense Unit .....	689-1321,1328
Cheektowaga Police Department, D V Advocate .....	686-7495
Kenmore/City of Tonawanda Police Department, DV Advocate .....	875-1687
Hamburg Police Department, DV Advocate .....	926-0057
Town of Tonawanda, DV Advocate .....	879-6692

#### **SHELTERS**

Haven House .....	884-6000
Community Services for the Developmentally Disabled .....	877-1111
Salvation Army .....	884-4798
Cornerstone Manor .....	852-0761
Little Portion Friary .....	882-5705

### **COURT ADVOCACY AND INTERVENTION**

Erie County District Attorney's Office, DV Unit .....	858-4630
Domestic Violence Bureau, Social Work Unit .....	858-4634,4635
Erie County District Attorney's Office, Victim Witness Assistance Program .....	858-4640
Erie County Family Court Domestic Violence Victim Advocate .....	845-2751
Buffalo City Court .....	845-2764
Haven House Justice Courts Advocate (Towns & Villages) .....	884-6002
Erie County Integrated DV Court Advocate .....	845-9384
Erie County Felony DV and Matrimonial Court Advocate .....	845-7437
International Institute of Buffalo .....	883-1900

### **COUNSELING SERVICES AND SUPPORT GROUPS**

#### **FOR VICTIMS AND CHILDREN**

Haven House .....	884-6002
Hispanics United of Buffalo .....	856-7110
Catholic Charities .....	877-4716 or 877-8822
Community Services for the Developmentally Disabled .....	877-1111
Veterans Administration Victim Services .....	862-8675

## *Erie County Family Resources*

For Information about Health and Human Services in WNY Dial 211  
[www.211wny.org/Erie-County](http://www.211wny.org/Erie-County)  
 or  
[www.centralreferral.org](http://www.centralreferral.org)

### **Mental Health Emergency & Suicide Prevention Hotline:**

Crisis Services 834-3131  
 For Youth: Spectrum Cares 882-4357

### **Food:**

Food Bank .....	852-1305
Angel Food .....	822-7925

### **Housing Subsidy:**

Belmont Shelter .....	884-7791
Rental Asst. Center .....	882-0063
Buffalo Municipal Housing Association .....	855-6774

### **Medical Services for Women:**

Buffalo General Hospital .....	859-2517
Children' Hospital OB/GYN .....	878-7737
Erie County Health Department Birth control .....	858-8422
Prenatal .....	858-8655
Erie County Medical Center .....	898-3152
OB/GYN .....	898-3409
Cleve-Hill .....	831-8612
Eggertsville .....	446-1041
1500 Broadway .....	891-7711
Northwest Buffalo Health Center .....	875-2904

### **Erie County Protective Services:**

Children .....	858-8705
Adults (18-59 yrs) .....	858-6817
Senior s (age 60+) .....	858-6877

### **Parenting Classes:**

Catholic Charities .....	856-4494
Common Sense Parenting .....	674-9730 (ext.4148)
Culturally Sensitive Parenting .....	896-0522
EPIC .....	332-4154
Salvation Army .....	883-9800

## **Family Voices Network of Erie County (FVN)**

**Location:** 478 Main Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Buffalo, NY 14202

**Hours of Operation:** 8:30am – 4:30pm Monday – Friday

**General Number for Inquiries:** 716-858-1546

Family Voices Network of Erie County (FVN) is a high level voluntary preventive service under the Erie County Department of Mental Health and Erie County Department of Social Services, often referred to as wraparound or care coordination services. The services are for families whose youth are at severe risk of being placed out of their home and/or hospitalized due to social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. Based on the needs, and presenting risks, a referral for services is submitted for the youth at risk. If a family is determined eligible for the services through the FVN Intake committee process, they will be linked to a community based agency who will assign a care coordinator to work with the youth and family. The care coordinator works with the family for a number of months. There are a variety of community based supports, and services that are uniquely wrapped around the family to stabilize the youth, and meet the identified needs. Families develop a crisis plan, develop and adhere to a plan of care, discover natural and community supports that can assist them, and work on building upon the youth and family strengths.

For more detailed information on Family Voices Network of Erie County, wraparound, and how to apply, please visit:  
[www.familyvoicesnetwork.org](http://www.familyvoicesnetwork.org)

## ***Healthy and Safe Families:***

As a parent, it is your job to love your children and help them grow up to be responsible and respectful. There are many ways you can do this & keep them safe.

- Spend time together as a family, everyday.
- Be a role model by acting in the way you want your children to act.
- Give your children praise for their good behavior.
- When they make a bad choice, give them consequences such as time out or chores or take away privileges such as games or play time.
- Give your children choices that help them to make good decisions
- Remember that sometimes we have to guide our children: they do not always know when to walk away from a bad situation.
- Give your children a routine to help them learn trust and discipline.
- Guide your children to make amends for bad choices.

Parenting is not an easy job. It is okay to ask someone you trust for help. Seek guidance from other family, friends or community members whom you trust.

New York State law forbids the use of physical force to discipline children or control a spouse if it causes a great amount of pain or impairment. For example, it is a violation of the law in New York State to hit a child with any object or to arrange the marriage of a child who is younger than 16 years old.

## ***What do I do if I am concerned with the decisions a family member is making about disciplining my children?***

“Once you recognize the abuse, know you are not to blame and you are not alone. No one deserves to be abused. (Excerpted from the Peaceful Families Project)

### ***Options which are available and processes you may need to go through:***

- Parenting Counseling and Workshops through organizations listed in the directory as part of this guide
- File a petition for Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) (For a child you can not control)  
Phone: (716) 858–8349
- Neglect and Abuse Proceedings (When a CPS petition is filed against a parent)
- Contact Detention Services for Juvenile Delinquency: (When a child is arrested)  
Phone: (716) 923–4062
- File a Family Offense Petition at Erie County Family Court  
Address: One Niagara Plaza, Buffalo, New York 14202

### ***Things to remember:***

- You may be charged with neglect if you know your child is being abused and do not do anything about it.
- You can anonymously call Child Protection Services without giving your name.
- You can always request a court interpreter if English is not your primary language

## ***Local Resources for Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) Proceedings***

Erie County utilizes an interdepartmental collaboration to serve these youths and families. The Departments of Social Services, Mental Health, and Probation coordinate the intake process of assessing the legal, behavioral, educational, and family challenges specific to each youth. Working with parents and youths themselves, the Family Services Team (FST) develops a plan of intervention, with close monitoring and follow up by professionals and family members. Interventions may include a variety of “wrap around” services, collaboration with the courts and schools and linkage to community agencies as needed. The FST is located at 478 Main St, Buffalo 14202, second floor. Intake phone is 858-8349.

### **Family Services Team (FST)**

**Location:** 478 Main Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Buffalo, NY 14202

**Hours of Operation:** FST Window: 9:00am–3:30pm  
Monday–Friday

**General Number for Inquiries:** 716-858-8349

Family Service Team (FST) is a voluntary preventive service under the Erie County Department of Social Services which also includes PINS (Persons In Need of Supervision) Diversion services. Families who want or need their youth enrolled in the service come to the FST window where an intake worker assesses the family risk levels within the home, school and community. Based on both the risks and strengths of the family, the best fit for community based service linkages are offered to promote family stabilization, as well as, increase the likelihood of the youth remaining in the home and community. Examples of such services include but are not limited to: Family Keys (as an early intervention service), Community Connections, Supportive Care Coordination (SCC), Family Functional Therapy (FFT), Urgent Access, and Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST).

In addition, FST manages high risk PINS behavior including ungovernable, runaways and school trancies. The overarching goal for Family Services Team is to assist families in stabilizing their home environments and prevent youth from becoming involved, or more deeply involved in the Juvenile Justice System, where possible and most appropriate.

## ***What happens when a Juvenile Delinquency case is opened: (When your child is arrested)?***

1. A Juvenile Delinquent is defined as a youth between the ages of 7 and 16 who has committed a crime. During daytime hours, the youth will be release to a parent , guardian or other appropriate resource.
2. The arresting agency must issue the appearance ticket returnable to probation intake. A juvenile charged as a juvenile offender or designated felony shall be brought to secure detention until the district attorney's office is contacted and a risk assessment completed.
3. Juveniles can be release to the Juvenile Delinquent Services Team (JDST) where services will be immediately accessed.
4. If it is determined that the Juvenile will be petitioned to court due to his or her risk assessment score, or due to the lack of a discharge resource a pre-petition will be drawn and the juvenile will appear in Family Court on the pre-petition.
5. If a juvenile is picked up by law enforcement and has an active warrant, he/she will be transported to the Family Court. If it is after hours, the law enforcement officer will follow the directions printed on the warrant.

## ***What happens when a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) case is opened?***

1. PINS is an intervention used for ungovernable, truant and run away youth between the ages of 8 –18. The intervention is family focused.
2. Low to moderate risk family/youth are referred to a FST (Family Services Team) through the Department of Social Services. The team consists of a Juvenile Probation officer, DSS Caseworker and Mental Health Clinician.
3. The goal of FST is to assist the family in stabilizing the home, school and community environment and avoid further system involvement which may result in placement or probation.
4. If efforts to resolve risk of the youth have been ineffective, the family can petition the court. An evaluation will be completed by the court to decide if efforts have been successful or more work between the family and FST is necessary.
5. The Family Services Team can be located at ECDSS 478 Main Street, Buffalo New York 14202. The intake phone number is (716) 858-8349. The family must complete a DSS 2921 at the FST office to receive services.

## ***What Happens when an Abuse or Neglect Petition is Filed?***

1. It is the duty of Family Court to provide oversight of family matters that are brought to court. It is also the duty to authorize the intervention of the Child Welfare System when the safety of a child is at risk.
2. In order for Family Court to provide oversight and assistance, a petition is filed. You will receive a notice to appear in court about allegations . At the end of the first court appearance, temporary relief is granted; the Child Welfare Agency may be granted supervision of your case, placement of your child or the petition will be dismissed
3. If supervision or placement is granted, a disposition is decided and a plan for your case is made. If neglect/abuse is found then an agreement or a contract of services is agreed upon to ensure for the return of your child .
4. When you have an open abuse/neglect case you will have to come back to court on a regular basis to review the case and the progress or problems that may be effecting your family.
5. An abuse/neglect case in Family court will end when permanency has been achieved for a child. This can happen when a child is returned home to their parent, a child is returned to an alternate family member, a child is freed for adoption or a child chooses to stay in foster care until they are an adult.

## ***What Happens when the Department of Social Services: Child Protection Services is contacted?***

1. The purpose of the Department of Social Services is to ensure that children are safe, and to prevent any future risk of abuse or neglect.
2. Once Child Protection Services receives a report, they initiate an investigation.
3. If the investigation reveals no risk, the case is closed. If the investigation reveals that there is a risk of harm, the child maybe removed temporarily until the final outcome. The report is then submitted for review and court recommendations and the case goes to court.
4. If the Court decides that Child Protection Services allegations have not been proven, the case is closed and the child is returned. If the Court finds the allegations are proven, Child Protection Services makes recommendations for services.
5. Family receives services, Child Protection Services recommends to the court closes the case. If family complete the recommended services, the case stays open

## *School Attendance*

All persons who are between the ages of five (5) years and twenty-one (21) years and who have not received a high school diploma shall MAY enroll in the school district in which they reside. All children in New York State MUST attend school according to the following guidelines:

- A child must attend school full time from the first day school is in session in September if he/she turns six years old on or before the first day of December of that school year. Please note: The school year begins on July 1st and runs through June 30th.
- A child who becomes six years old after the first of December must attend full time instruction from the first day school is in session in the following September.
- A child must attend full time instruction until the last day of session in the school year in which the minor becomes 16 years of age. New York State Education Law, §3205(3), provides that the board of education in a school district may require minors from 16 to 17 years of age, who are not employed, to attend full time day instruction until the last day of the session in the school year in which the student becomes 17 years old.
- A child who has completed a four year high-school course of study is not required to attend school regardless of age. A child who has applied and is eligible for a full-time employment certificate may be permitted to attend school part-time not less than 20 hours per week.

**When a child must be absent from school the parent or guardian must send a written note explaining the reason for the absence(s) when the child returns to school.**

**Acceptable reasons for an excused absence are outlined in the district's attendance policy.**

20 hours per week.

## *Local Resources for Abuse and Neglect Issues*

Erie County Department of Social Services uses natural supports and strengths in the family and the community throughout all programs. To reduce the risk of abuse and neglect, the Department offers preventive services. These include case management, counseling, respite, and in addition to many other supports specific to child and family needs, in a context sensitive to the family's culture and preferences.

Preventive services can be initiated through Erie County Department of Social Services, 478 Main St, Buffalo 14202, second floor. (716) 858-8349.

**\*\*Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect should be made to NY State Central Registry Hotline, 1-800-342-3720**

**\*\*General inquiries may be directed to the local Child Protective Services Office at (716) 858-8705.**

**My child is enrolled in a school but I have decided for safety and educational reasons that I would prefer to educate my child home(called “homeschooling”). Can I be charged with educational neglect for not sending my child to school?**

If you remove your child from school you must officially withdraw the child’s name from the school and district rosters. You must also make sure that you can provide all the proper home school registration materials and curriculum documentation. You must contact the Department of Education and seek permission for home schooling.

**As a new immigrant, I sometimes need to keep my fluent English-speaking child home from school to help me translate at my appointments. Could this be considered educational neglect?**

Yes. If the child is chronically absent from school, the school is required to investigate. Chronic absence can include 10 consecutive days or 20 intermittent days in a marking period.

**My child is 15 years old and refuses to attend school. It is beyond my control to ensure his attendance. Can I be charged with educational neglect?**

No. If a parent does everything reasonable to get his or her child to attend school but the child still is truant and does not go to school it is not considered neglect. Parents are expected to seek help if a child is not attending school. For assistance if your child is refusing to go to school refer to the resource directory on page 23 .

## ***Educational Neglect***

Educational neglect includes:

- Failure to enroll a school-age child in school
- Allowing unexplained absences from school
- Refusing recommended remedial services without good reason
- Failure to respond to attendance questions

There are three elements necessary for acceptance of a report of educational neglect based on absenteeism, as identified in guidance established at the Statewide Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR):

- Excessive unexcused absence from school by the child.
- Reasonable cause to suspect that the parent is aware or should have been aware of the excessive absenteeism and that the parent has contributed to the problem or is failing to take steps to effectively address the problem
- Reasonable cause to suspect educational impairment or harm to the child or imminent danger of such impairment or harm.

### **Examples**

**I enrolled my son in kindergarten but don’t always send him to school. Since kindergarten isn’t mandatory, does it really matter if he attends every day?**

It is true that kindergarten is not mandatory. In New York State it is compulsory that a child is enrolled and attending school in September of the year that they turn 6 years old. However, attending Kindergarten is beneficial and will improve a child’s academic attainment.